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**Transportation Committee**

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**SSB 5414**

**Brief Description:** Adjusting aviation fees and taxes.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen and Swecker).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Increases the aviation fuel tax from ten-cents to eleven-cents per gallon.
- Abolishes the pilot, airman, and airwoman state registration requirements and the fifteen dollar fee.
- Eliminates the Aircraft Search and Rescue, Safety and Education Account.
- Defines "air carrier"

**Hearing Date:** 3/28/05

**Staff:** Jerry Long (786-7306).

**Background:**

The Aviation division at the Washington's Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for the registration of Washington pilots, and airmen or airwomen, certain mechanics, aircraft dispatchers, and air-traffic control tower operators. The registration is fifteen dollars and effective during the current fiscal biennium (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005), seven dollars of each fee must be deposited into the Aeronautics Account to be used solely for airport maintenance. The remaining eight dollars must be deposited into the Search and Rescue, Safety and Education Account, to be used for:(1) search and rescue efforts; (2) safety and education; and (3) volunteer recognition and support. Effective July 1, 2005, the distribution expires and the entire fifteen dollar registration fee must be deposited into the Aircraft Search and Rescue, Safety, and Education Account.

Aircraft fuel users are taxed at ten cents per gallon of aviation fuel exempt for commercial users, farm use, research, testing, training and emergency transport entities. The revenue is deposited in the Aeronautics Account and is used for the administration of the DOT Aviation Division, airport construction and maintenance, and local airport aid.

**Summary of Bill:**

Certain provisions regarding aviation fees and taxes are revised as follows: (1) the state pilot and airman and airwoman registration requirement is repealed; (2) the aircraft search and rescue, safety, and education account is repealed; (3) the aviation fuel tax is increased one cent to eleven cents per gallon; and (4) air carriers, subject to the commercial aircraft exemption from the aviation fuel tax are defined as: An airline, air taxi, air commuter, or air charter operator, that provides routine air service to the general public for compensation or hire, and operates at least fifteen round-trips per week between two or more points and publishes flight schedules.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2005.